

SARRACENIA PURPUREA L. SSP. *VENOSA*
(RAF.) WHERRY VAR. *BURKII* SCHNELL
(SARRACENIACEAE)—A NEW VARIETY OF THE
GULF COASTAL PLAIN

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ABSTRACT

A new variety of *Sarracenia purpurea* L. ssp. *venosa* (Raf.) Wherry is herein described as var. *burkii*. The variety is confined to the Gulf coastal plain and is characterized by pale pink to lavender petals and a white to pale green-white carpel, the umbraculate portion of the style being most apparent in this respect.

Key Words: *Sarracenia purpurea* ssp. *venosa*, *Sarracenia purpurea* ssp. *venosa* var. *burkii*, Gulf coastal plain, southeastern U.S.

Sarracenia purpurea L. ssp. *venosa* (Raf.) Wherry is a carnivorous pitcher plant found mainly in the coastal plain of the southeastern United States, with mountain extensions in the Carolinas. There is a gap in its range in southern Georgia, and populations occur again in the central Gulf coastal plain (Wherry, 1933; McDaniel, 1966; Schnell, 1976). The Gulf coastal populations are addressed in this paper.

In 1933, Edgar Wherry (p. 4) commented on what he described as a "mutant" of *Sarracenia purpurea* with an almost white umbraculate portion of the style and pale rose-pink petals, collected near Theodore, Alabama by Frank Morton Jones in 1910. Wherry found additional plants in 1932 (he did not specify exactly where, but implied southern Alabama) and sent them to Louis Burk of Philadelphia, an apparently well-regarded horticulturist of the day. The plants flowered true to the original description in Burk's greenhouse the following year. Wherry (1933) suggested the possibility of naming a horticultural variety in honor of Mr. Burk, but never did.

Over a period of thirty-five years of botanizing the *Sarracenia* range, I have examined characters of North American pitcher plants in a series of papers (Schnell, 1978a, 1978b, 1979, 1981) in which *S. purpurea* ssp. *venosa* in the central Gulf coastal plain was mentioned. Gradually, I became impressed with the fact that nearly all specimens of the subspecies were similar to those described by Wherry; rather than being a rare mutant, it is essentially the only form present. The floral characters described, their con-



Figure 1. *Sarracenia purpurea* ssp. *venosa* var. *burkii* in flower, growing in the open. Sepals are a deep red while the widely paduriform petals are pale pink.



Figure 2. *Sarracenia purpurea* ssp. *venosa* var. *burkii*. Note nearly white umbraculate portion of the style. Light colored petals are pink to lavender in this example.

sistency among populations, and partial isolation because of the southern Georgia "gap" indicate sufficient circumscription to designate a variety of the subspecies.

***Sarracenia purpurea* L. ssp. *venosa* (Raf.) Wherry var. *burkii* Schnell, var. nov.**

Petalis pallide roseis vel lavandulaceis, stylis umbraculatis ovarisque albis vel pallide subviridulis, et sepalis diverse viridirubris vel purpurascensibus praediti.

Petals pale pink or lavender, umbraculate style and ovary white to very pale green, sepals variably green-red to purple.

TYPE LOCALITY. United States. Alabama. Washington County, off U.S. 45 near Deer Park: Open seep bog. 4 April 1992. (HOLOTYPE: NCU, pressed plants and color photos.)

ETYMOLOGY. Named after early twentieth century horticulturist Louis Burk since Dr. Wherry expressed interest in honoring Mr. Burk.



Figure 3. *Sarracenia purpurea* ssp. *venosa* var. *burkii*. In this example, the ovary and inferior portion of the style are nearly white, while the umbraculate portion is green-white.

RANGE. Central Gulf coastal plain: Florida panhandle from Liberty County west through the lower quarter of Alabama and Mississippi.

HABITAT. Open or moderately shaded pine savannas, seep bogs and along slow, shallow meandering streams. Common among other *Sarracenia* spp.

Plants grown in my greenhouse and outdoors clearly indicate that these characters are fixed and contrast markedly with the red to maroon petals and green (occasionally suffused with red) carpels of Atlantic coastal and mountain populations of ssp. *venosa*.

Interestingly, plants growing with maximum sun exposure have the palest carpels (almost pure white), while more shaded plants tend to have some very pale green in the carpel. Petal color does not vary with light exposure, and sepals do vary in depth of color.

Sarracenia purpurea ssp. *venosa* var. *burkii* grows often in large dense populations composed of many species of the genus, and all these individuals tend to hybridize readily one with the other, with many backcrosses in evidence. Care should be exercised

when the occasional plant of *S. purpurea* with red or maroon petals and green carpels is found. Given the fecundity of *Sarracenia*s in this range, one might reasonably speculate that such plants may be the product of hybridization with back-crossing and possible macrorecombination.

Selfing of plants of var. *burkii* under greenhouse conditions results in abundant seedset and greater than 95% germination with typical adult plants as the eventual outcome.

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